(a) the total number of Judges of High Courts in the country; State-wise till March 31, 1988;

(b) the number of Judges of High Courts belonging to Scheduled Castes and minorities till March 31, 1988 and

(c) the total number of vacancies of Judges of High Courts till March 31, 1988 and by when these vacancies are likely to be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI HANS RAJ BHARDWAJ): (a) and (c) A statement showing the sanctioned strength, actual strength and vacncies of Judges in High Courts as on 31.3.88 is attached [*See* Appendix CXLVI, Annexure No. 40.] Selection of Judges involves deliberation in consultation with the concerned constitutional authorities and is a continuous process. Government makes all possible efforts to ensure that vacancies of Judges are filled in expeditiously. It is not possible to indicate any definite time by which these vacancies will be filled.

(b) Information regarding caste or community is not asked for at the time of making appointments. However, according to the information received from Registries of High Courts, as on 1.11.87, there were 6 Judges belonging to scheduled castes and as on 1.11.86, there were 34 Judges belonging to minorities in various High Courts of the country.

1034. [*Transferred to the 10th May*, 1988.]

Fire in Ordinance Depot at Jabalpur

1035. SHRI YALLA SESI BHUSHANA RAO:

SHRI D. B. CHANDRE GOWDA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that very recently Artillery ammunition worth several crores of rupees was destroyed in a fire which broke out in the three magazines of the Central Ordnance Depot at Khamaria near Jabalpur;

(b) if so, what did the investigations in this regard reveal about the cause of the fire;

(c) what are the estimated losses in the fire that broke out;

(d) to what extent did the fire accident cause damage to the underground Air-conditioned platform magazine; and

(e) what steps Government propose to take to prevent such accidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (c) The loss of ammunition due to fire in two Magazines of COD, Jabalpur has been provisionally estimated at Rs. 19 crores.

(b) The Staff Court of Inquiry ordered for the purpose is in progress.

(d) This will be known only after the Staff Court of Inquiry has submitted its report.

(e) Instructions have been issued to intensify vigilance and for enhancing fire fighting capabilities.

Delay in Appointing Chief Executives of Public Sector Undertaking

1036. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that 23 public sector undertakings are without full time Chairmen and or managing directors as on 30th April, 1988;